BAT MAN

ALL NEW!
60¢
NO. 348
JUNE

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

and ROBIN™ HAVE RETURNED TO WAYNE MANOR...!

...BUT GUESS WHO IS WAITING TO WELCOME THEM HOME!
(JUST ONE GUESS, NOW!)

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C-883

ANOTHER DARKNIGHT ADVENTURE IN THE LEGEND OF THE...

BAT MAN

"SHADOW PLAY"

MOVING DAY AT WAYNE MANOR:

IN THE MANSION ABOVE, OLD FAMILIAR ROOMS HAVE BEEN DUSTED, WINDOWS OPENED, RUGS BEATEN AND DRAPERIES CLEANED.

BRUCE WAYNE AND DICK GRAYSON HAVE COME HOME AT LAST...

...AND TONIGHT, THEIR ALTER-EGOS HAVE RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL BATCAVE:

CAREFUL, DICK! THIS GIANT LINCOLN'S HEAD PENNY IS ONE OF OUR PRIZE TROPHIES!

LET'S NOT SMASH IT ON OUR FIRST DAY BACK HOME!

GERRY CONWAY — WRITER
GENE COLAN + KLAUS JANSON
ARTISTS
BEN ODA — LETTERER
ADRIENNE ROY — COLORIST
DICK GIORDANO — EDITOR

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DOING MY BEST, BRUCE!

HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO GET THIS THING DOWN UNDER THE WAYNE BUILDING IN THE FIRST PLACE?

LIBERTY

DON'T ASK

AS THE MAN SAID, "IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME!

WAIT-- I'M LOSING IT!

WATCH OUT!

WHOOUF!

COULDN'T HOLD IT--IT'S SPINNING FREE!

ALFRED, GET OUT OF ITS WAY!

SWIT SWIT

SWIT

THE PENNY'S HEADING ACROSS THE BATCAVE-- AWAY FROM THE CRIME COMPUTER! IT'S GOING TO--

KLANG!

WHAT AN *IMAGE!*

WE'RE OFF TO A *FINE* START AT THE *OLD HOMESTEAD!*

THREE GROWN MEN-- *TERRIFIED* BY A *RUNAWAY PENNY!*

HAHAHA

THE *LOOK* ON YOUR FACE, DICK--

BUZZZ

YOUR *PARDON,* SIR-- THAT'S THE *FRONT DOOR BELL,* UPSTAIRS.

APPARENTLY WE HAVE A *VISITOR.*

A BALEFUL MOON STARES DOWN UPON THE SHADOWED GROUNDS OF WAYNE MANOR AND IN THE MOON-LIGHT, TWO WAN FIGURES CONFRONT THE MAN NAMED ALFRED ALMOST ACCUSINGLY...

YES, MADAM?

MAY I ASK WHO YOU WISH TO--

WAYNE MANOR

WHERE IS HE?

WHERE'S MR. HIGH-AND-MIGHTY *BRUCE WAYNE?*

I WENT TO HIS PLACE IN *GOTHAM CITY*-- THEY TOLD ME HE'D MOVED *HERE.*

IS HE AFRAID TO *FACE* ME?

HAS HE *FORGOTTEN* ABOUT *ME* AND *MY CHILD?*

MADAM, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'RE--

WAIT! YOU CAN'T-- I HAVE TO *ANNOUNCE*--

WHAT'S THE *CRISIS*, ALFRED?

EH? *FRANCINE LANGSTROM--?*

YOU!

YOU PROMISED YOU'D *HELP* ME-- THAT YOU'D FIND A *CURE* FOR KIRK'S *SICKNESS--!*

I *MEANT* TO CALL YOU, FRANCINE--

LIAR!

YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT *US!*

YOU'RE *RICH--*

--YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT *ANYONE* BUT YOURSELF...

SHE'S *PASSED OUT!*

WHOA, PEACHES, DON'T *FALL* -- I'VE GOT YOU!

ARE YOU GOING TO FIND MY *DADDY?*

MOMMY *CRIES* ALL THE TIME SINCE HE WENT AWAY.

PLEASE BRING BACK MY DADDY... *PLEASE?*

THE BATCAVE, TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER...

DO YOU THINK THIS IS *WISE,* SIR, BRINGING THE CHILD DOWN HERE, EVEN *BLINDFOLDED?*

ALFRED MAY BE *RIGHT,* BRUCE!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

PERHAPS TO PROVE TO MYSELF THAT I'M *NOT* A MONSTER, DICK!

4

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

FRANCINE LANGSTROM'S ACCUSATION HIT *CLOSER* TO THE MARK THAN I MIGHT CARE TO *ADMIT.*

HOW IS SHE, ALFRED?

RESTING *COMFORTABLY,* SIR.

THE POOR WOMAN IS *EXHAUSTED.* LORD KNOWS HOW LONG SHE'S BEEN WITHOUT *SLEEP.*

I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PUTTING HER IN THE *MASTER BEDROOM...*

"...AND WHEN I LEFT, SHE WAS, AH, 'DEAD TO THE WORLD,' SO TO SPEAK..."

GOOD!

HELLO, REBECCA. DO YOU KNOW *ME?*

YOU'RE *THE BAT-MAN!*

I SAW YOU ON *TV!*

ARE YOU *AFRAID* OF ME?

NOOO... I DON'T *THINK* SO.

SHE'S A *TERRIFIC KID.*

HER FATHER-- HE'S *THE* KIRK LANGSTROM?

THAT'S *RIGHT,* DICK.

AND THIS *ANTIDOTE* WILL EITHER *SAVE* HIS LIFE--

--OR *KILL* HIM!

KIRK LANGSTROM... THE MAN-BAT!

HE'S ALWAYS WALKED A FINE LINE BETWEEN SANITY AND MADNESS--

--SINCE THE FIRST NIGHT HE USED A BAT-GLAND EXTRACT TO TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO A CREATURE PART MAN, PART BAT!*

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, IT LOOKED LIKE HE'D FOUND A WAY TO CONTROL HIS TRANSFORMATIONS--

--EVEN BECOMING A KIND OF HERO, MODELING HIMSELF AFTER ME.

"BUT THEN, A FEW MONTHS AGO, THE CONTROL STARTED TO SLIP AWAY.

"FIRST, HIS DAUGHTER REBECCA BECAME DEATHLY ILL--AND IN A TWISTED WAY, HE BLAMED ME FOR HER ILLNESS.

"HIS LIFE FELL APART--HE COULDN'T HOLD A JOB--AND FINALLY, ONE NIGHT, HE ACCIDENTALLY OVERDOSED HIMSELF...

"...AND THE RESULTING TRANSFORMATION PUSHED HIM OVER THE BRINK INTO INSANITY.

"HE HAUNTED WAYNE MANOR, HAVING FOUND HIS WAY INTO THE BATCAVE. WE FOUGHT.

"...AND I TRIED TO SAVE HIM WITH THE SAME ANTIDOTE I'D USED THE FIRST TIME WE MET, YEARS AGO.

"UNFORTUNATELY, THE OVERDOSE HAD POISONED HIS SYSTEM SO BADLY, THE ANTIDOTE HAD NO EFFECT--"

*DETECTIVE 400--DC.

"--AND HE ESCAPED, HIDING SOMEWHERE IN THE CAVE SYSTEM THAT HONEYCOMBS THESE OLD HILLS.

"AS BRUCE WAYNE, I PROMISED FRANCINE I'D FIND A CURE...

"...BUT THE ONLY CURE IS AN OVERDOSE OF ANTIDOTE, AND AS I SAID, THAT MIGHT KILL HIM."

WELL...

NO ONE SAID THIS JOB WAS *EASY!*

THOSE *LENSES* YOU SLIPPED UNDER YOUR MASK--

INFRA-RED?

WITH THEM, I CAN SEE *ALMOST* AS WELL AS HE CAN *HEAR.*

THEY'RE *INSURANCE*--

--JUST LIKE *REBECCA.*

I NEED TO CONVINCE LANGSTROM SHE *DIDN'T* DIE OF HER ILLNESS.

HER PRESENCE *MIGHT* SAVE LANGSTROM'S *LIFE.*

GOOD LUCK.

BOTH OF YOU.

WITHOUT A BACKWARD GLANCE, THE BATMAN STEPS INTO SHADOW AND IS GONE.

HIS FOOTSTEPS ECHO SOFTLY, THEN FADE TO SILENCE AS HE TURNS DOWN A SIDE-TUNNEL.

IN THE RESULTING HUSH, ANOTHER SOUND SUDDENLY IS HEARD FROM ABOVE... THE LEATHERY RUSTLE OF HUGE WINGS...

...FOLLOWED BY AN INHUMAN SHRIEK, AND A DARTING FIGURE LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL!

SKEEEEEK

MY WORD--!

MAN-BAT!

HE WAS HIDING *HERE* ALL THE TIME!

THAT'S THE ROUTE *THE BATMAN* TOOK, SIR!

QUICKLY, THE *COMMUNICATOR*-- WE MUST *WARN* HIM OF THE DANGER COMING FROM *BEHIND*--!

NO *GOOD*, ALFRED!

NOT EVEN THE *STRONGEST* RADIO SIGNAL CAN PENETRATE *SOLID ROCK*!

SKEEEEEK

AND EVEN IF I *WENT IN* AFTER HIM, HOW COULD I *FIND* HIM?

IT'S LIKE A *MAZE*-- *MILES* OF IT!

FOR GOOD OR BAD, *THE BATMAN* IS ON HIS OWN.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

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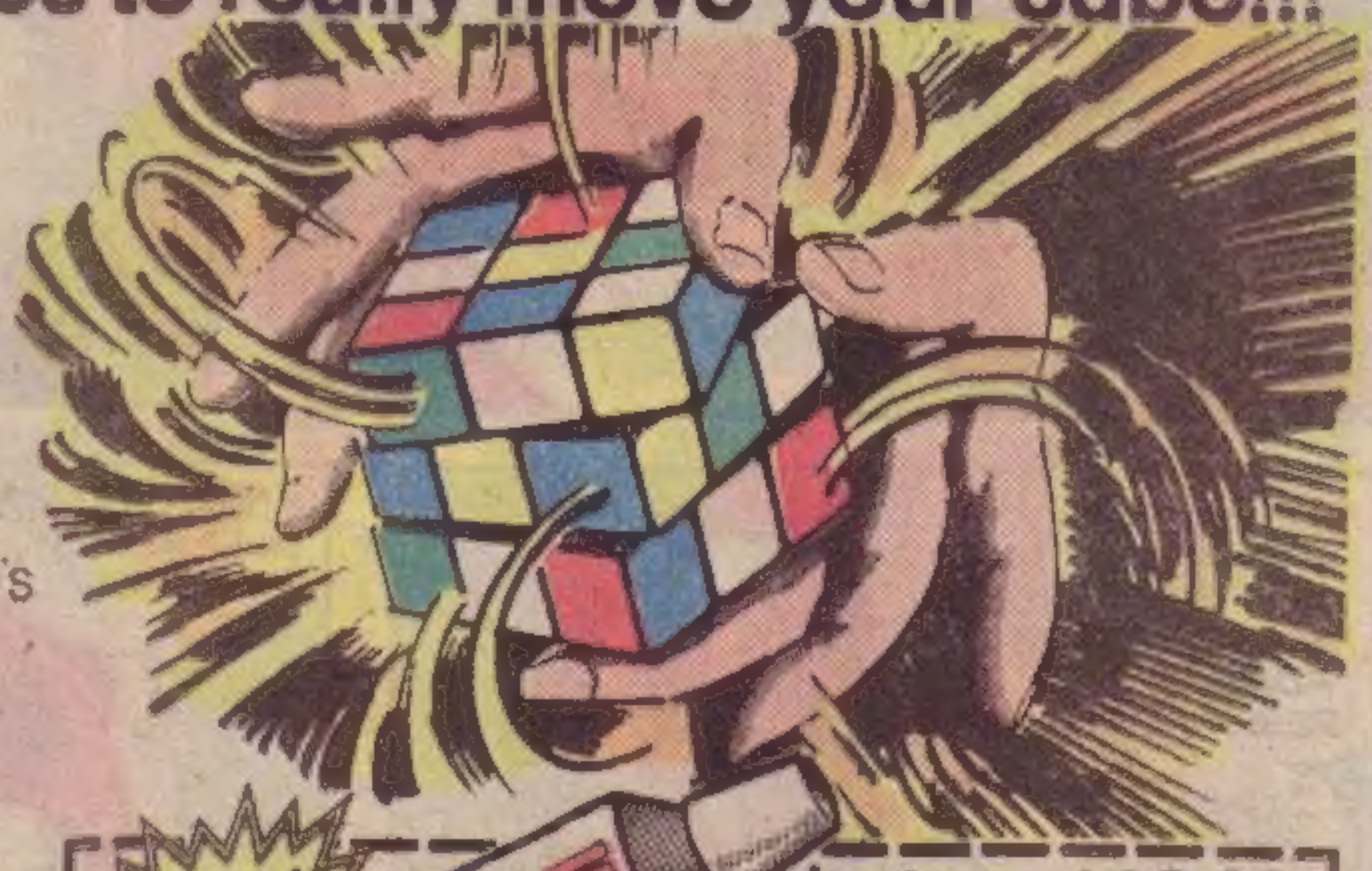

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AND WHAT OF THOSE OTHERS WHOSE LIVES ARE INTERTWINED WITH THAT OF THE BATMAN?

WHERE ARE THEY TONIGHT, AS HE RISKS HIS LIFE TO SAVE A MAN WHO WANTS HIM DEAD?

DAD

YOU'VE BEEN *STANDING* OUT HERE LOOKING AT THE RIVER FOR ALMOST AN *HOUR*.

BARBARA.

WHY DON'T YOU COME HOME?

HOME. NOW THERE'S AN *INTERESTING* WORD.

I *HAD* A HOME, ONCE, BEFORE YOUR MOTHER DIED.

THEN, FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, *POLICE HEADQUARTERS* WAS HOME.

MAYOR HAMILTON HILL TOOK THAT ALL AWAY FROM ME, WHEN HE *FORCED* MY RESIGNATION.

I DON'T *HAVE* A HOME, ANYMORE.

JAMES GORDON, YOU MAKE ME SO *MAD*--!

YOU'RE *BEHAVING* LIKE A LOST OLD MAN!

I'VE GOT TO *PUSH* YOU OUT OF YOUR *FUNK*--!

AND FOR THAT, I'LL NEED A LITTLE *HELP*...

JASON BARD INVESTIGATIO

Phone. 555·0983

(MORE ON EX-COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON IN *DETECTIVE* #515.

ELSEWHERE, TONIGHT...

RUN THAT BY ME *AGAIN*, VICKI...

YOU SAY YOU HAVE *PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF OF THE BATMAN'S* REAL IDENTITY--

--BUT YOU *WON'T* GIVE ME THE PICTURES FOR PUBLICATION?

I'LL TRY TO STAY *CALM*.

I WON'T *SUCCEED*, BUT I'LL *TRY*.

MORTON, IT'S LIKE *THIS*:

I PROMISED A FRIEND HE'D HAVE A CHANCE TO *PROVE ME WRONG*...

...AND AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE CAUSED THE *LAST* TIME SOMEONE HAD "PROOF" OF THE BATMAN'S SECRET IDENTITY,* I WANT TO BE *100% SURE* THAT I'M *RIGHT*.

*THAT WAS MAYORAL CANDIDATE ARTHUR REEVES, IN BATMAN #344 -- DG

DON'T *PUSH* ME ON THIS, MORTON.

YOU MADE ME YOUR *PHOTO EDITOR* BECAUSE YOU TRUST MY *JUDGEMENT*.

SO *TRUST* ME.

SIGH. WHY DO MY PEOPLE ALWAYS GIVE ME SUCH *TSURIS*?

MORTON DEAL FROWNS AS THE DOOR SWINGS SHUT BEHIND THE DEPARTING VICKI VALE. THEN...

SIR? I MAY HAVE SOMETHING THAT'LL *INTEREST* YOU...

TALK ON, DEAR BOY!

"*BOSS*" *THORNE* IS *ALWAYS* INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM ONE OF HIS OLD *PROTÉGÉS*...!

MOMENTS LATER...

INTRIGUING.

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I TRICKED *REEVES* INTO DESTROYING HIS *CANDIDACY* WITH A SET OF *PHONY* BATMAN PHOTOS.

WOULDN'T IT BE *IRONIC* IF I NOW PUT MY HANDS ON THE *REAL THING?*

HAHAHA

"BOSS" RUPERT THORNE WAS ONCE THE MOST POWERFUL SECRET MOVER IN GOTHAM CITY POLITICS

HE IS WELL ON HIS WAY TO RECLAIMING THAT TITLE, THOUGH NO ONE KNOWS IT BUT A HANDFUL OF FRIGHTENED MEN...

RETURN NOW, TO THE CAVERNS BEYOND THE BATCAVE, WHERE AN EERIE PHOSPHOR LUMINESCENCE CASTS GHOSTLY SHADOWS ON MOSSY EARTHEN WALLS.

WATCH NOW, AS ONE SUCH SHADOW MOVES...

...AND BECOMES THE BATMAN.

THERE'S NO *POINT* IN GOING ANY FURTHER.

WE'VE COVERED *MILES* OF TUNNEL, WITH NO SIGN OF LANGSTROM *ANYWHERE*

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, REBECCA? *TIRED?*

I'M NOT TIRED, BUT *TEDDY* IS.

ARE WE GOING TO SEE MY *DADDY?*

NOT *TONIGHT*, BECCA.

WE'LL *REST* HERE A FEW MOMENTS THEN HEAD BACK.

LET ME GET A *FIRE* STARTED WITH THIS *DRY* MOSS, SO WE CAN -

--SEE.

MY GOD... *LANGSTROM!*

SNAP!

DADDY?

KIRK--FOR THE LOVE OF-- AHHH!

YOUR DAUGHTER--

SKREEE! REBECCA IS DEAD! SHE DIED BECAUSE OF YOU! SKREE!

WHAM!

HIS CLAWS ARE RAZOR-SHARP! CAN'T LET HIM SLASH ME AGAIN!

KIRK, WILL YOU LISTEN? SHE'S ALIVE!

CRUNCH

THE BATMAN'S CRY IS CUT OFF BY A SOUND OF IMPACT.

ABOVE, THE MAN-BAT SLOWLY TURNS...

NO! ROCKS-- GIVING WAY UNDERFOOT--!

A MINUTE PASSES.

TWO

THEN..

HE DRAWS HIMSELF UP LIKE A DROWNED MAN RISING FROM THE SEA.

HE IS BATTERED, LIMPING...

...BUT ALIVE.

I HATE TO THINK HOW *FAR* I WOULD HAVE FALLEN--

--IF I HADN'T MANAGED TO *CATCH* MYSELF ON A LEDGE TWENTY FEET *DOWN*.

WHAT WAS I *THINKING* OF, BRINGING REBECCA DOWN HERE?

DELUDING MYSELF THAT *KIRK LANGSTROM* WAS STILL ALIVE, *SOMEWHERE* INSIDE THAT *MONSTER*--!

THEY'RE NOWHERE AROUND.

I SWEAR, IF HE'S *HARMED* HER--

EEEEEEE

REBECCA!

HE LEAVES THE FIRELIGHT, AGAIN BECOMING ONE WITH THE SHADOWS.

HIS EYES ADJUST QUICKLY TO THE INFRA-RED IMAGES NOW VISIBLE THROUGH THE SPECIAL LENSES IN HIS MASK...

SOME KIND OF CAVERN UP AHEAD.

I HEAR WATER DRIPPING-- FAINT ECHOES--

AND SOMETHING ELSE:

BATS!

SKEEK! WELCOME TO MY BAT-CAVE! SKREEEK!

I CAME HERE TO BE AMONG MY OWN KIND.. SKREEK!--BUT YOU WOULDN'T GIVE ME PEACE! SKREEK!

SKREEK! YOU HOUNDED ME-- BROUGHT A CHILD TO MOCK ME! SKREEK! I HATE YOU, BATMAN-- HATE YOU!

REBECCA! THANK HEAVEN, SHE'S ALL RIGHT!

BUT HOW CAN I REACH HER, ACROSS THAT CHASM..

--WITH MAN-BAT BLOCKING MY WAY?

THAT PROBLEM IS RESOLVED, A HALF-SECOND LATER, AS..

I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!

THE BATARANG AND BATROPE AND WAITING IN HIS HAND; FLINGING THEM GAINS HIM AN INSTANT--

SKRRGK!

AN INSTANT, AND NO MORE!

THUNK

UNNH!

--PAST A TERRIFIED CHILD--

INSTINCTIVELY HE GRABS FOR THE ROPE AND FEELS HIMSELF BEING UPWARD!--

--INTO EMPTY SPACE ABOVE A BLACK ABYSS.

THE BATARANG IS LODGED IN A CREVICE OVERHEAD!

IF IT CAN JUST SUPPORT MY WEIGHT LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO DO--

WHOOM!

--THIS!

SUDDENLY..

GO 'WAY!

I WANT MY DADDY--

DAD-DY!

REBECCA?

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

NOT MANY MONTHS AGO, KIRK LANGSTROM WAS DRIVEN MAD, IN PART, BY FEAR FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S LIFE.

CONVINCED SHE WAS DEAD, HE LET INSANITY CONSUME HIM.

NOW HER CRY SUMMONS HIM BACK FROM THAT MAD INFERNO--

--AND FOR JUST AN INSTANT KIRK LANGSTROM IS HUMAN AGAIN.

I THOUGHT YOU'D DIED... SKREEK! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU.

DARLING, LITTLE DARLING... SKREEK! ALMOST LOST YOU...

DADDY, YOUR FACE IS ALL FUNNY...

...I'M REAL SCARED!

HOLD ME-- DON'T LET GO....!

RIGHT, KIRK--DON'T LET GO, UNTIL I'VE DOSED YOU WITH THIS ANTIDOTE!

SKREEK

I KNOW IT'S WHAT KIRK LANGSTROM WOULD WANT.. EVEN IF IT KILLS HIM!

BUT FATE IS IN A KIND MOOD TONIGHT.

ONLY SECONDS PASS; TO THOSE WHO WATCH, IT'S MORE LIKE HOURS, AS GRAY FLESH HEAVES AND RESHAPES ITSELF..

SKREE SKREE SKREE

--FROM MONSTER INTO MAN.

NOT LONG AFTER...

FRANCINE ...WAKE UP...

...I'M BACK...

...THANKS TO THE BATMAN...

...AND MOST OF ALL, TO REBECCA.

KIRK, IT'S REALLY YOU? YOU'RE NOT--?

IT'S TRUE, FRANCINE. THE BATMAN BROUGHT HIM HERE, UNCONSCIOUS, BUT IN ONE PIECE.

I THINK SHE'S FIGURED THAT OUT, BRUCE.

MR WAYNE, I KNOW THIS IS YOUR HOUSE--

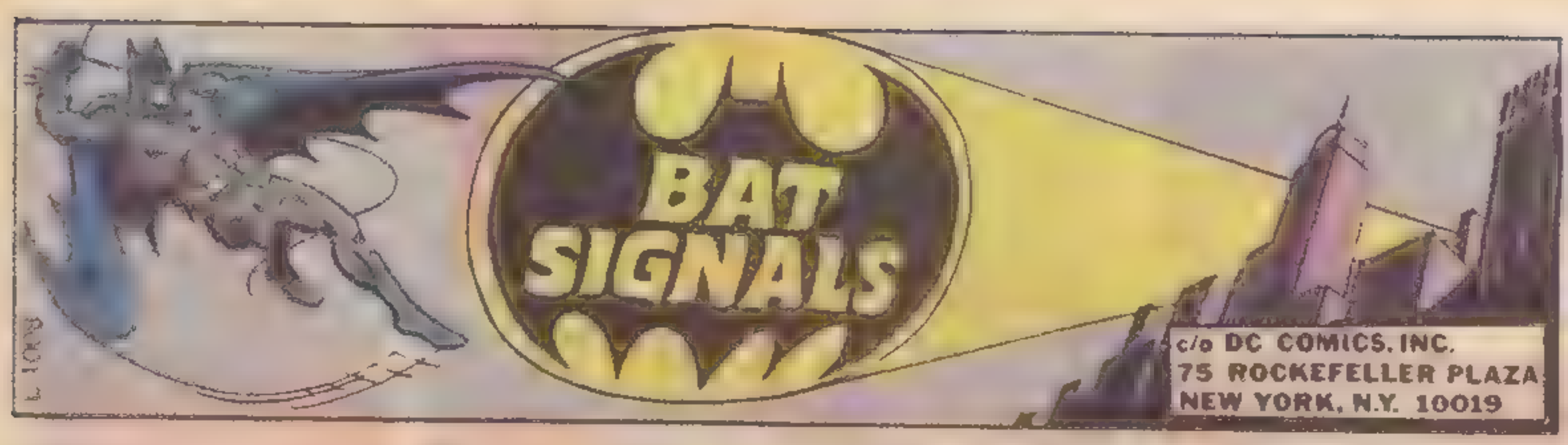
--BUT DO YOU MIND GIVING US A FEW MINUTES ALONE?

TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED.

AND ON BEHALF OF US ALL--WELCOME HOME!

(IN DETECTIVE COMICS #515)

NEXT "THE ACADEMY OF CRIME!"



Dear Dick,

About "A Dagger So Deadly..." I simply find it impossible to believe that Bruce Wayne is going to lose his fortune to Poison Ivy. He is much too witty to succumb to that! He'll certainly find a way to put an end to her mad scheme

As for the mysterious man with the cigar, sitting in the shadows, handing Arthur Reeves the proof of Batman's secret identity: I'll make a wild guess about who he is. Two-Face!

Lise Leveillee, 3405 Grand Blvd. #3, Montreal, Que.

Witty?

You were correct in assuming Bruce would find a way to outwit Poison Ivy but wrong about the mystery man's identity One out of two ain't bad!

"Witty"?!

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

'Re: 343; this new villain that you have introduced is a good one but he deserved more than one issue

I like the idea of the ongoing sub-plots. The Ivy sequence is ingenious and just goes to show that chess-like moves can be just as common with criminals as with heroes. I'll be watching to see how Bruce gets out of this mess. As for the mayoral race, my vote goes to Reeves. I'll guess that the man in the shadows will turn on Reeves and attempt his murder. Batman will intervene and save a semi-grateful new mayor's life. Batman's existence will then be justified in Reeves' mind

Ted Saverio Naczek

Since more votes went to Hill (despite yours for Reeves) the rest of your conclusions can't be correct. I hope you'll enjoy our version of what happens as much as we enjoyed your version.

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

Ok, you've managed to get Gene Colan back at DC and on BATMAN; now, all you've got to do is manage to get Gene's partner, Tom Palmer, and you'll make everybody happy.

As an inker yourself, you must realize how well the two men complement themselves.

Terry Pallat, Ottawa, Ont.

I sure do! And although Tom Palmer's services are not available to us, I do not feel that Klaus is "next" best. As an editor and an inker...I love Klaus' inking!

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

"A Dagger So Deadly..." was pretty good but the previous issue was great. Why? Because of the appearance of Man-Bat! I hope he gets well soon.

Wesley Allisin, Box 149, Blue Diamond, NE

You and his wife are both rooting for an early recovery, Wesley. And when it happens, (soon!) you'll hear about it just moments after Rebecca does.

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

Never have been a fan of yours, really. I did like the O'Neil/Adams GREEN LANTERN and the earlier work that Jack Kirby did for DC, but couldn't read much else. Now, upon recently returning to funnybooks after a five year lapse, I've been pleasantly surprised by a number of your latest efforts.

Your company appears to be making a commitment to improvement. Gerry Conway hasn't produced better work in years than in the two January Batman titles. Colan is such a fluid and superbly graceful, expressive artist that he provokes Gerry to transcend his typical product. The sense of command and characterization he learned is returning

You've got promising beginnings in BATMAN, DETECTIVE COMICS, ARAK, NEW TEEN TITANS, PHANTOM ZONE, WONDER WOMAN and CAPTAIN CARROT. Although you'll have to work hard to make any improvement in the Superman titles, I wouldn't be surprised, or displeased, to see DC resurrect a dreadfully depressed medium

Michael Macrone, Brown University Box 3320, Providence, RI,

..."Funnybooks"?

Anyway, thanks for your kind words, Michael. I think Gerry Conway feels as I do... that the **only** *way to edit/write/draw comics well is to write/edit/draw comics that you yourself would like to read! I edit the Batman titles for* **me** *to read, Gerry writes them for* **himself**... *If* **you** *enjoy what* **we** *enjoy, we've got a convert!*

"Funnybooks"?!

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

After seeing issue 343, I have an urgent request to make Give this book back to Irv Novick! I'm spoiled for his beautiful rendition of Batman

Chas. Brown, 39 Stockton, Brentwood, NY

First, Charles, note the comments of Michael Macrone earlier and know that the majority of your fellow readers are overwhelmingly in support of the transition to Gene Colan

Now realize how we and others felt when similar transitions in artistic teams occurred. Recall the disappointment when Neal Adams left the GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW series...when Marshall Rogers left BATMAN, when Joe Kubert gave up SGT. ROCK (and the Hawkman strip), Bernie Wrightson left SWAMP THING and numerous other artists moved along to other super strips.

Similar sentiments were felt for retiring writers in our field

Nothing is static! Life **is** *flux!*

Our admiration for Irv is immense and we, too, had mixed feelings about his move to the Superman titles. We've been through it before when he left the Flash and Captain Storm strips. But he's doing such a fine job with his new assignment, it is hard to feel any loss. And if Gene moves along, eventually, we think you'll be just as concerned

• • • • •

Dear Dick,

No.343 re-affirmed my faith. Under the new team, BATMAN is reaching the potential I always knew was there in such an excellent character.

Gene is turning out his best artwork ever and Gerry has proven that he can inject interesting characterization into the Darknight Detective.

And all of the little (and complex) touches that have emerged: Batman's little joke on the final page, the pressures on Bruce of leading two lives, Batman's concern for fellow motorists and, of course, the heated race for mayor of Gotham.

Cheers to you, Dick, and Gerry, Gene, Klaus, John and Adrienne!

Doc, 48 Burrows Dr, Sheffield 5, South Yorkshire, S57JQ, England

And cheers to you, Doc, and the rest of our growing Bat-audience. Thank you and good afternoon.—DG

FATE...

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IT TOUCHES US ALL...

ON THIS COOL AUTUMN NIGHT IT REACHES DOWN OUT OF THE VOID AND EMBRACES THE WOMAN NAMED SELINA KYLE...

AGH! BLASTED WIND! MY HAT!

...THEN LETS GO FOR A MOMENT...

...THEN EMBRACES HER AGAIN...

THE CATWOMAN

"THE MAN, THE BULLET, THE CAT"

PART I

KAREN, NO!

I'LL GET IT, LADY!

MY GOD! ONLY SECONDS TO SAVE HER!

SCRIPT: BRUCE JONES
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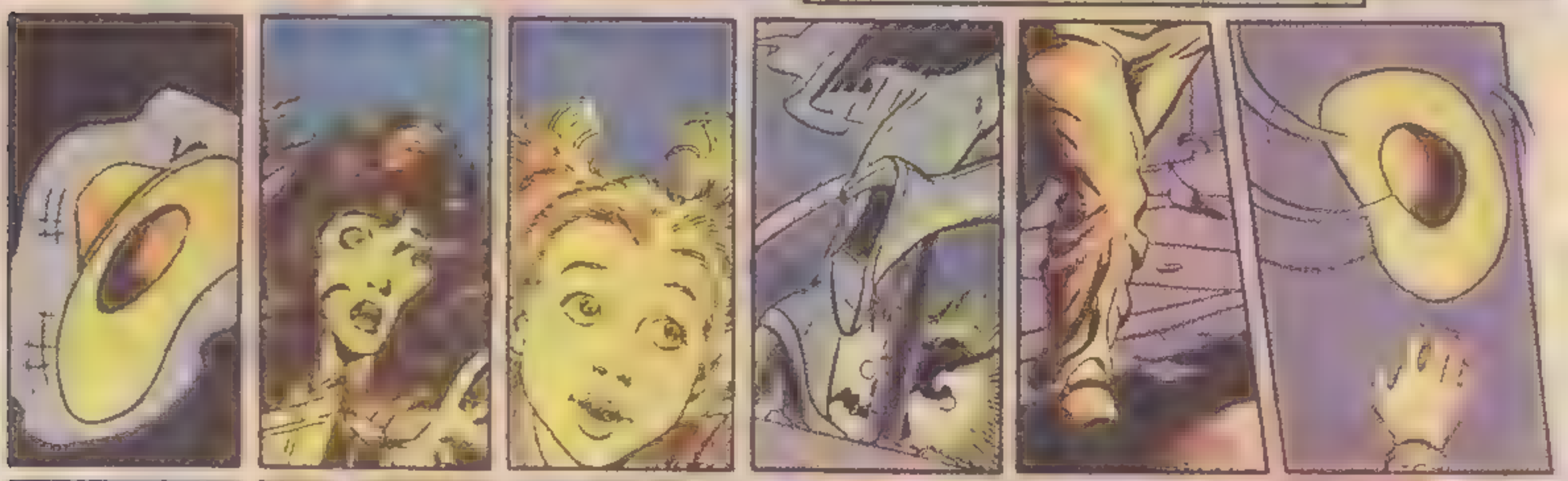

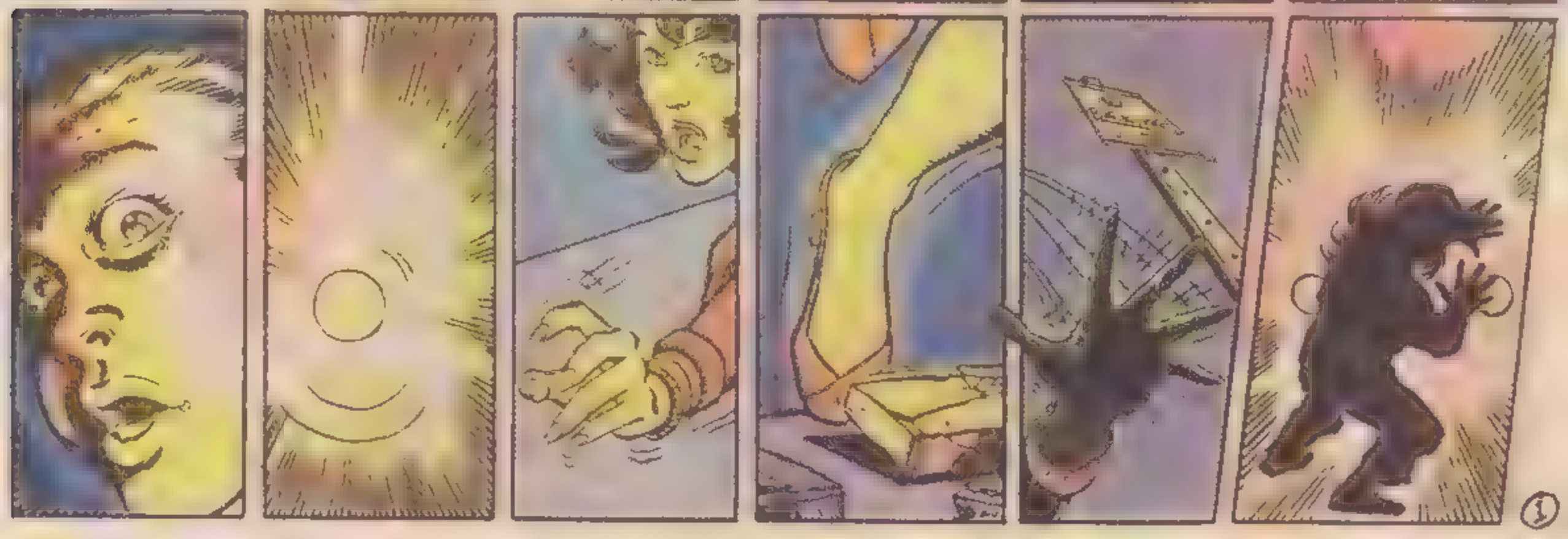

SCREEEEEE

EE

EEEEEE

DAN, NO! YOU'LL BE KILLED!

EEEEE

I'M A BIG FAN OF YOURS, CATWO--UH, MISS KYLE...

OH? DO ALL UNION LEADERS KEEP UP WITH US SUPER-FOLK?

THIS ONE DOES. HOW *IS* THE BATMAN, BY THE WAY?

DAN, IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THAT DRINK...

WELL, WHEREVER THE BATMAN IS, I HOPE HE DIDN'T SEE ME IN ACTION TONIGHT! I CERTAINLY WASN'T ANY HELP IN SAVING THAT LITTLE GIRL!

EVERYBODY TRIPS UP SOMETIME. HOW ABOUT JOINING US FOR A DRINK, MISS KYLE?

WELL, I...

PLEASE DO, MISS KYLE...

"..WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE OR YOU WILL NEVER FINISH YOUR SPEECH!"

M-M, PRETTY NOTE. WHO SENT IT?

WHO KNOWS? I'M SCHEDULED TO GIVE THAT SPEECH AT THE TOWN HALL TONIGHT. IT'LL BE TELEVISED AND COULD DECIDE THE ELECTION.

BUT YOU'RE A LITTLE NERVOUS...

HOW'D YOU LIKE TO SIGN ON AS MY PERSONAL BODYGUARD, CATWO--SELINA--Y'KNOW, SORTA COVER MY RIGHT FLANK. I'LL PAY YOU WELL.

THANKS, BUT I DON'T WORK FOR HIRE.

CONSIDER IT A *FAVOR*, THEN... I MEAN, IT *WAS* YOUR HAT THERE IN THE STREET...

IS THAT HOW HE WINS ELECTIONS, MRS. BROWN, BY PLAYING ON THE PUBLIC'S GUILT?

WE *WOULD* APPRECIATE YOUR HELP, MISS KYLE. DAN'S LIFE MAY BE IN REAL DANGER!

OKAY... AS A FAVOR, THEN... JUST THIS ONCE!

HA-HA! I'LL DRINK TO THAT!

TOWN HALL, SIX HOURS BEFORE THE SPEECH...

BIG, ISN'T IT, SIMMONS?

DAN WILL BE BEHIND THAT PODIUM. IT'S A WIDE-OPEN TARGET, AS YOU CAN SEE.

LOOK, IF WE CAN BUILD A SHELTERED BOOTH IN FRONT OF THE PODIUM AND PLACE A MIRROR BEHIND IT SO THAT MR. BROWN CAN STAND INSIDE THE BOOTH TO DELIVER HIS SPEECH, IT'LL *LOOK* AS IF HE'S STANDING BEHIND THE PODIUM...

...BUT IN FACT WILL ONLY BE *REFLECTION* THAT'S SEEN BY THE AUDIENCE--IF SOMEONE SHOOTS, THEY'LL ONLY HIT THE MIRROR. YOU LIKE IT, SIMMONS?

FINE. NOW IF WE CAN CONVINCE DAN...

I DUNNO... I'M SLIPPING A LITTLE IN THE POLLS... IF THE VOTERS THINK I'M AFRAID...

LET THEM THINK WHAT THEY WANT! YOU'LL BE ALIVE, AT LEAST.

IT'S A BRILLIANT CONCEPT, MISS KYLE. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL, DAN.

YOUR SPEECH STARTS -AT SEVEN, MR. BROWN. I'LL BE BACK HERE AT SIX TO ESCORT YOU TO THE AUDITORIUM...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, MRS. BROWN, I'LL SEE TO IT THAT HE'S TAKEN CARE OF.

SHE'S RIGHT, DAN.

OKAY, LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT...OOPS...

THAT'S NOT FUNNY, DANIEL BROWN!

SEE YOU FOLKS AT SIX!

HAMBURGER HAVEN, TWO HOURS BEFORE THE SPEECH...

I'D BETTER EAT UP AND GET OVER TO THE HOTEL, IF I--

I SAID NO MUSTARD, YA DUMB BROAD! YA DEAF?

I-I'M SORRY, SIR, CAN I CHANGE IT FOR YOU?

YEAH! LET'S START BY CHANGIN' YER FACE!

HA HA HA

AN' *ANOTHER* THING-- THIS HERE'S *MILK!* I SAID I WANTED A MILK *SHAKE!*

HA HA

WELL, THAT'S EASILY REMEDIED...

HUH? WHO'RE YOU?

...WE JUST PUT YOUR PADDY-PAW ON TOP OF THE GLASS LIKE THIS...

WHOOAAAA

...AND *SHAKE!!*

GET HER!

NAW... HOLD UP... LET 'ER GO...

...FOR *NOW*...

HIGHWAY 101, ONE HOUR BEFORE THE SPEECH...

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN IT... THOSE CLOWNS ARE GOING TO MAKE ME LATE FOR MY APPOINTMENT WITH BROWN...

IN SECONDS, THE GANG OF VENGEFUL TOUGHS SURROUNDS SELINA'S CAR...

YAH-HOO! DRIVE HER OFF THE ROAD!

EE-HAH!

KER-WUMP!

GET HER, SID!

PULL HER OUT!

HEY! HEY, THERE AIN'T NOBODY IN HERE!

WHAT THE--

WHILE BACK AT THE HOTEL...

IT'S TEN MINUTES TO SEVEN! WELL, WE CAN'T WAIT FOR SELINA ANY LONGER... LET'S GO!

I'LL GET THE CAR!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, BOYS?

CATWOMAN!

MISS KYLE HAD AN APPOINTMENT, BUT I'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR YOUR COMPLAINTS...

SHE'S CHAINED OUR BIKES TOGETHER!

OOPS! NOW LOOK WHAT I'VE GONE AND DONE!

OUR BIKES! NOOOOO!

SCRAMBLE!

LOVE TO STAY AND PLAY TAG WITH YOU BOYS, BUT I'VE GOT THIS URGENT APPOINTMENT.

MAYBE WE CAN HAVE A HAMBURGER TOGETHER SOMETIME...

TEN AFTER SEVEN! BROWN'S ALREADY ONSTAGE!

TOWN HALL...

THAT GUY WITH THE VIOLIN CASE!...SNEAKING IN THE SIDE DOOR...

EX

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, PAL! MR. BROWN WON'T BE NEEDING YOUR ACCOMPANIMENT TONIGHT!

UH!

CRAZY BROAD!

HUH... HEROIN! HE WAS JUST A COMMON DOPE PEDD...

KA CHOW!

HE'S BEEN SHOT! CANDIDATE BROWN'S BEEN *SHOT!*

OH MY GOD...

ABRUPTLY, A PIERCING REPORT ECHOES FROM THE STAGE AREA...

TO BE CONTINUED...